

Sabbath Controversy in Allegan, Mich.

ESR

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THE subject of this Tract is an article which appeared in the *Allegan Record*, of Jan. 28th on the inquiry, “*What day is holy?*” and our reply to the same. We give them in this form that the reader may have both sides of the question.*SCAM 3.1*

While we contended openly for the truth in Allegan, no man objected, but when we were gone, many were found to expose the so-called heresy. And this professed Watchman is among the opponents to the plain word of the Lord which declares “The *seventh* day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”*SCAM 3.2*

We ever supposed it to be the duty of a Watchman to preach the Lord’s word. Not one text of Scripture however, is found in Watchman’s article to sustain his Sunday Sabbath. This article is a fair sample of the course pursued by these Sunday men. If they had a plain precept for Sunday how eagerly would they grasp and present it before us, and what a lasting relief would they find from all their toil in striving to build up a rival to God’s holy Sabbath. But as it stands, the Lord says “*Seventh day*” while they say First. Their great labor is to get the fact before the minds of the people, that Sunday was observed almost back to the days of the apostles, and this they will prove by history. If tracing a thing almost to the apostles makes it apostolic, then the Catholics would put the Pope’s Tiara on the head of St. Peter. “Watchman” introduces his article with the following remarks:*SCAM 3.3*

MESSRS. EDITORS: I am aware that the subject of this communication is a little one side from the general objects of your paper. But as all our political institutions recognize the First as the Sabbath, and as the efforts of certain zealots would subvert this order of things, and produce a very unpleasant state of things in the community, I sincerely hope you will find it consistent to insert this article.*SCAM 4.1*

Yours truly.
Allegan, Mich., Jan. 18, 1858.

For the Allegan Record.

What Day is Holy

MESSRS. EDITORS: Will you allow space for a few words in answer to this question? Intrinsically holiness never belongs to time, as it does not to a place or house. Is the place where thou standest holy? It is so because a holy Being is present. Is a house holy? It is so merely because it is used for holy employment. The timbers in the most sacred temple or church are no more holy in themselves than those in a store or factory. In like manner, days and hours and minutes have no intrinsic holiness. They are holy only because given to holy thoughts and acts. The scripture law in spirit sets apart every seventh day for holy uses, and the other six for labor. But no hour is named when the seventh day of rest shall begin. But had it fixed upon an hour, as at sundown, then there would be no uniformity except in the same longitude. He who lives in Jerusalem will begin his Sabbath just as the sun disappears beneath the western horizon, and the citizen of London will wait two hours and twenty minutes for his sun to set, and the citizen of New York seven hours and forty minutes, and the citizen of San Francisco ten hours and twenty minutes, and the Christians of Honolulu thirteen hours. A moment's reflection shows the impossibility of keeping, the world over, the same identical hours for sacred time. Never was such a thing designed, and no time was ever pronounced holy in itself. Who then does not see that this vast ado about the hour or day when we shall begin to rest and engage in holy employments, is far from having any vital importance! Since now there is almost a universal agreement in all Christian lands, that we will begin at midnight by the time in our longitude, on a certain day and keep a Sabbath of twenty-four hours, who expects to turn back the dial one whole day? Will legislatures, courts, and all systems of government be persuaded that they have made a fatal mistake and leaped one day beyond the divine will? Will Christians who conscientiously observe the Lord's day be driven back into the yoke of Jewish rites? It is a hopeless undertaking. And it surely is no favor to any peaceable community to be disturbed and vexed by raising in the minds of the ill informed conscientious scruples on this subject. *SCAM 5.1*

The observance of the day of our Saviour's resurrection as a Christian Sabbath, and calling it Lord's day, began with the inspired

apostles of Christ. If all christendom is now under a great mistake, it is one made by the apostles under the teachings of their Lord; and who will not feel safe to follow in their footsteps? After the resurrection of Jesus, he met his disciples and said "peace be unto you" several times on the first day of the week, and never as we can learn on the seventh. And in all the New Testament history afterwards we see no reason to suppose that Christians kept any day holy except the first. The Jews of course continued to observe the seventh, and even some converts to Christianity from among Jews observed the seventh day as a festival. But the Lord's day was universally kept by Christians. Mosheim says in his history, "In the first century, all Christians were unanimous in setting apart the *first* day of the week on which the Saviour arose from the dead for the solemn celebration of public worship." Prof. Stuart says, "The zealots of the law wished the Jewish Sabbath to be observed as well as the Lord's day." But he adds, "The early Christians, one and all of them held the first day of the week to be sacred." The apostle John says, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day" and about six years after his death Ignatius wrote thus: "Let us (Christians) no longer more sabbatize," that is keep the seventh day like Jews, "but let us keep the Lord's day." No fact in history is better established than that the day of Christ's resurrection began to be kept sacred by his apostles, with him in their midst, and from that time to the present there has been a wonderful agreement on this subject among all men of learning and candor. I will only add in the language of Ignatius who must have lived in the times of the apostle John, "Let every one that loves Christ, keep holy the Lord's day, the queen of days, the resurrection day, the highest of all days." *SCAM 6.1*

WATCHMAN.

Reply. What Day is Holy?

In your paper of Jan. 25th, I notice an article with the above heading, in which the writer, who styles himself, "Watchman," contends for *Sunday* as a holy day. As I am the principal individual who has in a course of sixteen lectures "disturbed" and "vexed" the community on the Sabbath question, and thus called down the frown of this professed Watchman to that extent that he gives us the name of "zealots," it is proper that I should make some remarks.*SCAM 7.1*

The first position taken in the article is "Intrinsically, holiness never belongs to time." "Days and hours and minutes have no intrinsic holiness. They are holy only because given to holy thoughts and acts." Again he says, "The scripture law, in spirit sets apart every seventh day for holy uses, and the other six for labor." Here is a frank admission of what was claimed in the lectures, and of what the Watchman is contending against in his article, namely, the Scriptures show that the *seventh* day is set apart for holy uses. The fourth commandment, *Exodus 20:11*, states that God hallowed the seventh day. *Genesis 2:2, 3*, shows when it was done, and how: "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Sanctify: to set apart for a sacred use." *Webster*. From this we see that the seventh day was set apart for a holy use from creation. And in pleading the claims of the fourth commandment, instead of striving to drive the people "back into the yoke of Jewish rites," as Watchman claims, we are contending for an institution which had its origin nearly 2500 years before the Jewish rites as he calls them were known.*SCAM 8.1*

Our friend says, "A moments reflection shows the impossibility of keeping, the world over, the same identical hours for sacred time." Who said we must? We have not: we claimed in one of our discourses that the individual here attempting to keep the same hours that constitute the seventh day at Jerusalem, must keep part of the sixth day and part of the seventh. But the Watchman clears away his own fog on this point. He says: "There is almost a universal agreement in all Christian lands, that we will begin at midnight by the time in our longitude, on a certain day and keep a Sabbath of twenty-four hours." This he afterwards calls the first day

of the week. We contend for the seventh.*SCAM 8.2*

“And if there was a First the earth around,
As sure as rates, the seventh can be found.”

As we have claimed, the fourth commandment enforces in plain terms the seventh day. Christ showed in his teachings [*Matthew 5:18*,] that “*Till heaven and earth pass*, one jot or one tittle” of the law (of which the fourth commandment formed a part) should not pass. From this and other testimonies, we see that the teachings of Jesus were to the effect that the fourth commandment was still binding.*SCAM 9.1*

We next notice the Watchman’s proof for Sunday-keeping. “The observance of the day of our Saviour’s resurrection as a Christian Sabbath, and calling it Lord’s day, began with the inspired apostles of Christ.” I deny it, in as plain terms as Watchman has stated it. There is no record in the New Testament that the disciples ever had a religious meeting in the day time of the first day of the week, after the day of Pentecost. We find an evening meeting at Troas [*Acts 20:7*,] but allowing the Bible mode of computing time, “The evening and the morning were the first day,” this meeting was the same as on our Saturday night; and on the next morning, Paul and his brethren started on foot and by ship on a long journey.*SCAM 9.2*

The Watchman says: “After the resurrection of Jesus, he met with his disciples and said ‘peace be unto you’ several times on the first day of the week, and never, as we can learn, on the seventh.” Is this the best evidence for the change of the Sabbath? No command; but the Watchman is basing it all on example. It cannot be shown that Christ said, “Peace be unto you” only *once* on the first day of the week, and then, according to *Mark 16:14*, “they sat at meat.” And in the morning of the same day, according to *Luke 24*, they came to the sepulchre to anoint the body of Jesus, an act they would not perform the previous day; but “they rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” *Luke 23:56*. The second time Jesus said “peace be unto you,” was “*after eight days*,” which would bring it as late as the second or third day of the week. If saying to the disciples, “Peace be unto you,” made the first day of the week holy, it would make the second or third day equally as

holy. Watchman's argument on this point proves too much, and so proves nothing.*SCAM 10.1*

His next proof is from history. If his quotations from history are all correct, we will show that historians are at variance among themselves, and there is not such "a *wonderful* agreement on this subject among *all* men of learning and candor as he may have supposed. Socrates, A.D. 412, Book v, chap.22, says, "For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the *Sabbath* of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, refuse to do this."*SCAM 11.1*

Athanasius, A.D. 340, says: "We assemble on Saturday, not that we are infected with Judaism, but only to worship Christ the Lord of the Sabbath."*SCAM 11.2*

Neander, in his history of the Christian religion and Church, page 168, says: "Opposition to Judaism introduced the particular festival of Sunday, very early, indeed, into the place of the Sabbath. The festival of Sunday like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance; and it was far from the intention of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect-far from them and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century, a false application of this kind had begun to take place; for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin."*SCAM 11.3*

We now notice some of the Watchman's quotations from history. He quotes Moshier to show that "all Christians, in the first century, set apart the first day of the week for public worship." This does not prove that they considered the first day of the week holy. *Justin Martyr*, A.D. 140, in his apology for Christians, says: "The Christians in the city and in the country assembled on the day called Sunday; and after certain religious devotions, all returned home to their labors." And *Moshier* in his history of the fourth century, virtually admits the same. Vol. 1, pp. 304-5. He says that the first day, "In consequence of a peculiar law enacted by Constantine was observed with *more solemnity* than it had formerly been." *Dr.*

Chambers says; “By Constantine’s laws, made in 321, it was decreed that for the future the Sunday should be kept a day of rest in the cities and towns; but he allowed the country people to follow their work.”-*Encyclopedia*, Art. Sund. Lond. 1791. And *Milman*, in his *Hist. Christianity*, pp. 280, 325, says that law “enjoined the suspension of all public business and private labor except that of agriculture.” If Constantine’s law required a more strict observance of Sunday than it formerly had, we do not hesitate to say that it had not previously been kept as holy time.*SCAM 12.1*

The Watchman next produces a garbled testimony from *Ignatius*. “Let us no longer keep the Sabbath in a Jewish manner, but let us keep the Lord’s day.” But we will see if what the Watchman has left out will not greatly modify his construction of *Ignatius*. “Let us not keep the Sabbath in a Jewish manner, in sloth and idleness; but let us keep it after a spiritual manner, not in bodily ease, but in the study of the law, and in the contemplation of the works of God.” “And *After* we have kept the Sabbath, let every one that loveth Christ keep the Lord’s day, *festival!*” This gives altogether a different idea from the Watchman’s testimony about *Ignatius*.*SCAM 13.1*

“Wm. Tyndale, writing in the sixteenth century said, the Sabbath was changed by men. *Dr. Henry* acknowledges that the first day of the week is not called the Sabbath in the Bible. *Bishop Cranmer* (born 1489) said, they observed the Sunday according to the judgment and will of the magistrates. *Melancthon*, the friend of Martin Luther, confessed, that the Sunday-keeping was not founded on any apostolic law, but rested solely on tradition.”*SCAM 13.2*

“The American Presbyterian Board of Publication in Tract 118, states that the observance of the seventh-day-day Sabbath did not cease till it was abolished, after the empire became Christian, i.e., till the Bishop of Rome became omnipotent. Therefore, the Waldenses who never submitted to the authority of the Pope, according to the testimony of Moshier, (Vol. 1, p.332,) of Robinson in the history of Baptism, and Jones in his Church History, they observed the Hebrew Sabbath as late even as Charles XII of France, and long afterwards.”*SCAM 13.3*

Yours for truth.

J. N. LOUGHBOROUGH.

Battle Creek, Feb, 5th, 1858.

